SUBJECTS.

44. Widening of bridle-path to Kuttikal.

Thirdly, he requested assistance in the matter of widening the bridle-path to the village of Kuttikal—a distance of three and a half miles so as to make it available for cart traffic. The cost would not exceed Rs. 5,000 including the construction of small wooden bridges. The want of such a road made it very difficult for them to feed their employés in the monsoon months.

45. Grant of land for rubber planting.

Finally, he spoke of the difficulties that existed in the way of acquiring forest land for rubber cultivation, though many square miles of suitable land, at present only inhabited by elephants and other wild animals, were available which, if cultivated, would bring prosperity to thousands of His Highness' subjects, and, were it made available, capital would be brought to the country to develop it. He said he would point out that rubber planting differed from all previous planting enterprises, such as coffee, tea, &c., in that rubber trees of all the three best known varieties were in themselves best forest trees and, therefore, re-forestation took place after the original forest had been removed by the axe of the planter. He said that any one applying for land was referred to the Forest department who almost invariably reported that the land was reserved and could not be sold, or that de-forestation would interfere with the rainfall which argument might apply to forest land on mountain ridges of 4,000 feet and over and not to low-lying lands at the foot of the hills. The rubber planters did not wish to interfere with vested rights or native holdings in any way. They only asked that they might be allowed to take up forest lands of a suitable nature from the Sirkar, provided that they re-forested them with rubber and provided that they did not interfere with royal trees or genuine timber reserves. Such suitable lands if cut into blocks of 200 to 500 acres and sold or leased on reasonable terms would fetch a large sum of money and subsequent revenue to the State.

In conclusion, he thanked the Dewan for giving them the opportunity of making known to His Highness' Government the primary needs of the planters and said that the Departments concerned might be asked to consider their claims and, if found reasonable, to push through the relief asked for during the coming dry months of the year.

Dewan's reply.—The representations are reasonable. The Peishkar considers that a dispensary at Mundakayom is necessary. The request will be favourably considered.

The request for the extension of the Magisterial jurisdiction will also be favourably considered and early orders passed.

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